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12 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI)  
2 p.m., Thursday, September 12, 1963

PRESENT: Governor Harriman, The Attorney General, Mr. Gilpatric, Mr. Bell, General Taylor, Mr. McCone, Mr. Murrow, Mr. Forrestal

Mr. Phillips and Mr. Hannah were present for Item No. 1

Mr. Battle, Mr. Bond, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Meyer were present for Item No. 2.

Mr. J.C. King was present for Item No. 3.

Mr. Maechling and Mr. Nolan were present for the meeting.

1. Southeast Asia

a. The Strategic Hamlet Program

Mr. Rufus Phillips, Assistant Director for Rural Affairs, USOM, Saigon, reviewed for the Group the status of the strategic hamlet program in Viet-Nam. He outlined the functions of the U.S. and GVN organizations responsible for this program and described the planning responsibility from the province level to the GVN Interministerial Committee in Saigon. He stated that as the program is conducted on a decentralized basis, it has continued to function despite the Buddhist crisis.

Mr. Phillips said that there are now about 85 to 90% of the population in hamlets in the I and II Corp areas; 70 to 75% in the III Corp area; and about 65% in the IV Corp, Delta Area. Hamlets continue to be a priority target of the Viet Cong and the reaction of the inhabitants following attacks has varied considerably. He said trends in the Delta area are discouraging at the present time due to the geographical characteristics of this part of Viet-Nam, lack of interest by the central government and poor leadership displayed by both the military and civilian officials assigned to this area. Elaborating on this latter point, he stated that the Delta area has been traditionally weak in local leadership due to past actions by the Vietnamese and French; as a result, at present, all province chiefs are Army officers.

Mr. Phillips stressed the need for aggressive Vietnamese leadership at the province level to maintain the progress achieved to date in the hamlet program. Local elections are an encouraging development. He believes that with continued support at present levels for the next two years, the hamlet program will achieve its intended objective.

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b. Progress Report on Cambodia

Mr. Hannah brought the Group up to date on recent developments since the progress report on the Internal Defense Plan for Cambodia was prepared by the Country Team.

Mr. Gilpatric raised the question on how the reduced foreign aid appropriation will affect MAP programs in Cambodia. Mr. Bell stated although he has not examined this point in detail, he believes that some reduction in this program is contemplated.

The Group in noting this progress report requested Mr. Hannah to determine the status of the Country Team's proposals for civic action projects.

c. Status Report on Thailand

Mr. Hannah stated that the Status Report on Thailand indicated that in general satisfactory progress is being made. He reported that owing to Thai reluctance to take steps to improve the National Registration Program, the Country Team has been requested to conduct a unilateral survey to determine what can be done to make the registration program effective.

2. Report on the Interdepartmental Seminar

Mr. Bond, Coordinator of the Interdepartmental Seminar, reported on the changes made in the Seminar since his last report to the Group. The curriculum has been revised and the course reduced to four weeks. Instruction is now divided into progressive phases to provide better continuity. Faculty members are now giving 37% of the instruction, poor lecturers have been eliminated, and more emphasis has been placed on case studies.

Mr. Bond commented that a problem still exists in obtaining students who meet established grade criteria and whose future assignments indicate attendance is desirable. This problem should be resolved when the lists of prospective students for future courses are submitted for approval to the Subcommittee on Training.

General Taylor requested that Mr. Bond send a copy of the current curriculum to the Joint Staff so that it can be transmitted to the various military war colleges for review. This review will look for overlaps in instruction to determine whether graduates of these colleges should, in the future, attend the Seminar.

Mr. Bond commented on how the subjects of youth and labor are now presented in the curriculum of the Seminar. In the discussion that followed, the importance of more adequately covering the role of labor in developing countries was stressed as well as the need for the Seminar to take maximum advantage of all available resources within the Government for lectures and reading material. It was suggested that the Department of Labor be requested to assist the Seminar in this respect. The Attorney General stressed the importance of youth and labor in counterinsurgency programs, and stated that these subjects had always been considered a vital part of the curriculum of

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the Seminar. The Chairman commented that part of the problem is that the role of labor in support of U.S. policy has never been clearly defined.

Mr. Meyer and Mr. Battle presented their ideas and how the subjects of youth and labor could be more adequately presented, and offered their assistance to the Seminar.

Mr. Carroll, representing the Subcommittee on Training, stated that the Subcommittee has asked for a complete review of the modernization phase of the course, and that the Subcommittee desired to make more frequent reports to the Group. He suggested that each agency review and publish the student criteria for attendance at the Seminar.

Mr. Murrow suggested that it would be highly desirable to bring a representative back from the field to provide a first-hand account of programs designed to work with labor and youth groups.

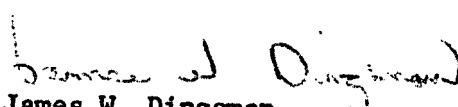
After further discussion it was agreed that the Subcommittee on Training, with Mr. Bond, should further review the youth and labor content of the Seminar, assisted by Messrs. Meyer and Battle, and present a revised curriculum in this regard at the next meeting. The Chairman also requested that the Subcommittee on Training and Mr. Bond meet with him prior to the next meeting.

3. Special Report on Venezuela

At the special request of Mr. McCone, Mr. J.C. King presented a brief report on the security situation in Venezuela. He said that the purpose of this report was to alert the Group to a pattern of terrorist activity now being directed against U.S. personnel and installations. He said that efforts of the Venezuelan Government to control these outbreaks have not met with much success. At present it is estimated that some 200-300 terrorists are in Caracas and about 300-400 in the rural areas. Of those in Caracas, about seven of the key people are now in Moscow for training and are expected to return in 3 or 4 months, at which time terrorist activities are expected to increase.

At the Chairman's suggestion, the Group agreed to obtain a coordinated State/CIA evaluation of the situation and consider at its next meeting what actions should be taken in view of these developments.

Sufficient time was not available to consider Item No. 4 of the Agenda.

  
James W. Dingeman  
Executive Secretary  
Special Group (CI)

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